

SENTENCES: purposes

There are four different purposes of a sentence, which are described below.

Declarative

A declarative sentence **makes a statement** and ends with a period.

The administration building is in the middle of MSU's campus.
Pizza is a popular food among college students.
Leah sits at her computer every morning and checks her email.

Interrogative

An interrogative sentence **asks a question** and ends with a question mark.

How did you find my book bag?
Did you make coffee this morning?
When are we going to leave?

Exclamatory

An exclamatory sentence **shows strong feeling** and ends with an exclamation point.

The dog is attacking her!
Don't run in the hallways!
She was such a beautiful bride!

Imperative

An imperative sentence **gives a command**.

Eat your oatmeal, Jonathon.
Shut the door please.
Look in the closet.

SENTENCES: understanding clauses

There are two types of clauses that make up sentences: independent and dependent. Independent clauses have a subject, verb, and predicate, and they express complete thoughts. They are complete sentences on their own. Dependent clauses, however, are not complete thoughts or sentences; they need to be attached to an independent clause in order to form a complete sentence and make sense.

A Complete Sentence...

- ▶ names a **subject**—who or what that performs the action
- ▶ has a complete **verb** that indicates tense, person (1st, 2nd, 3rd), and number (singular or plural)
- ▶ includes at least one **independent clause** and does not begin with a subordinating word (a word that connects a dependent clause to an independent clause—see list of subordinating words in the box below)

An Independent Clause...

is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought—an independent clause is a simple sentence.

A Dependent Clause...

is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought. A dependent clause cannot be a sentence by itself. Often a dependent clause is marked by a conjunctive or subordinating word (see the

words listed in the box below to learn what they are).

Here are three examples of dependent clauses; because they are not complete thoughts, they cannot be sentences:

- ▶ Because Rebecca studied in the coffee shop for hours.
(*What happened because she studied there?*)
- ▶ Although Rebecca studied in the coffee shop for hours.
(*What did not happen because she was studying there?*)
- ▶ And Rebecca studied in the coffee shop for hours.
(*What else was she doing there?*)

EXAMPLES: STRUCTURES USING INDEPENDENT & DEPENDENT CLAUSES

NOTE: The verb is technically part of the predicate, but I have separated the verbs out of the predicates here for illustration purposes.

Simple Sentence (subject, verb, predicate)

Rebecca	studied	in the coffee shop for her chemistry quiz.
<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>predicate (expresses what is true about the subject)</i>

Compound Sentence (at least two independent clauses connected by a coordinator/connector word)

Rebecca	studied	in the coffee shop for her chemistry quiz,	and	later	she	wrote	her paper.
<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>predicate</i>	<i>connecting word</i>		<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>predicate</i>

Complex Sentence (one independent clause, also called the main clause, and one dependent clause)

Rebecca	studied	in the coffee shop for hours	because	she had a chemistry quiz the next day.
<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>predicate</i>	<i>subordinating word +</i>	<i>dependent clause</i>

Compound-Complex Sentence (at least two independent clauses and one dependent clause)

After	she went to the coffee shop,	Rebecca	studied	for a quiz	and	wrote	a paper.
<i>subordinating word +</i>	<i>dependent clause</i>	<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>predicate</i>	<i>conjunction +</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>predicate</i>

SUBORDINATING WORDS

Words used to link a dependent clause to an independent clause

After	Though	Whereas
Although	Till	Whether
As	Than	Lest
Because	Unless	Which
Before	Until	While
But that	What	Who
If	When	Why
In order that	Whenever	Even though
Lest	Where	How
No matter	No matter	So that
Supposing	Since	That

PURE CONJUNCTIONS

Connecting words

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

SENTENCES: structures

There are four different types of sentence structures in English, which are all explained below.

Simple Sentences

A simple sentence includes a **subject** and a **verb** and expresses a **complete thought**.

EXAMPLES

Some students like to study in groups.

Joey and Sally play soccer three times a week.

Samantha goes to the gym and exercises every day.

Compound Sentences

A compound sentence includes two independent clauses joined by a coordinator (conjunction). Except for in very short sentences, there should always be a comma before a coordinator.

EXAMPLES

I tried to speak French, and my friend tried to speak English.

Jonathon played football, but Jack played hockey.

Josh went to work, so Maria took a nap.

NOTE: *You want to think carefully about which coordinator you choose because each expresses a slightly different relationship between the two independent clauses. For example, what is the difference in meaning between these pairs of sentences?*

Alex played soccer, so Marcy went shopping.

Alex played soccer, for Marcy went shopping.

Mark was playing basketball, and Maria read a book.

Mark was playing basketball, so Maria read a book.

Complex Sentences

A complex sentence has an independent clause joined by one or more **dependent** clauses. A complex sentence always has a **subordinator** such as *because, since, after, although, when*, etc., or a **relative pronoun** like *that, who*, or *which*. Commas may or not be required.

EXAMPLES

When he handed in his homework, he forgot to give the teacher the last page.

The teacher returned the homework after she noticed the error.

The students are studying because they have a test tomorrow.

After they finished studying, Josh and Maria went to the movies.

Josh and Mary went to the movies after they finished studying.

NOTE: *When the sentence begins with a subordinator, a comma separates the dependent and independent clause. When the sentence begins with an independent clause, do not use a comma to separate the clauses.*

Compound-Complex Sentences

Compound-complex sentences include **at least two independent clauses separated by a conjunction** and a **dependent clause**.

EXAMPLES

Although Shanna enjoys watching horror movies, she rented the latest action movie, and she enjoyed it very much.

Jenna forgot her best friend's birthday, so she sent her friend a card when she finally remembered. While they both get sunburned easily when they go to the beach, Lisa loves to sunbathe and Jody loves to swim in the ocean.